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AN OUTLET FOR PATRIOTISM

BY EMMA L. BURNETT

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Mrs. Avery was nothing if not patriotic, "My country, right or wrong," was her motto. As she herself expressed it, nothing caused her to "flame up" more quickly than any unfavorable criticism of things pertaining to the United States of America. She simply adored the Stars and Stripes. At all times when the flag was in evidence her house outshone all others in the neighborhood. The national colors streamed from her bicycle handles and appeared frequently in her household decoration. Of course, our late war with Spain intensified her patriotism. She reveled in the "Glory crowned heights" to which this war conducted us. Every sailor and soldier—even the regulars—were heroes in her sight, and when, in the midst of things, the Peace Jubilee was celebrated in Philadelphia, by viewing the show from a grand stand those bleak days she got one of the worst colds she ever had in her life, and took great credit to herself for the same.

But besides all these occasional ways of manifesting her love of country, she devoted a great portion of her time to furthering the interests of a patriotic organization to which she belonged—"The Daughters and Sisters of all United States' Wars." She was constant in her attendance at the meetings of her branch of this society, and kept herself informed as to what was going on in the higher grades.

It was when her local society was going to entertain one of these delegate bodies, which great event entailed much preparation, that Mrs. Avery met Mrs. Watson, an old school friend, and recently a fellow church member. Glad of the chance to tell it all to a new auditor, who certainly listened with polite interest, Mrs. Avery poured forth the whole story of who was going to be there, and what they were all going to do, how they were to have luncheon and toasts, to one of which she was to respond, and wound up by inviting her friend to accompany her to the meeting.

"It would give me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation," Mrs. Watson cordially responded, "but I have a sort of a club myself, where I have a short paper to read, the afternoon of that very day."

"Oh, how unfortunate! But could you not manage to attend both meetings? Now, I have a proposition to make—if you come with me, I'll go to your meeting if you'll let me. Its some intensely literary thing, I suspect." "I should be delighted to take you," Mrs. Watson declared eagerly.

Upon comparing hours and finding that both meetings might be managed, that arrangement was made without further explanation.

The meeting of the D. A. S. A. U. S. W.'s was certainly a grand success, It was held in

elegant rooms of one of the leading hotels—for which the entertaining society paid a good, round price. The floral decorations were in perfect keeping with the best clothes of the Daughters and Sisters, while "Old Glory," in multiplied numbers, and of the finest flag material, floated over the animated scene. The various societies represented reported progress, a place for the next annual meeting was decided upon, telegrams of greeting exchanged with a similar organization then in session in a neighboring city, an invitation to a reception that evening accepted, and other important business transacted, after which the assembly listened to a carefu ly prepared paper by one of the visiting sisters, concerning the probable site of the birthplace of the wife of a certain Revolutionary hero. A spirited discussion followed, and it was resolved by a rising vote that when the correct site was ascertained they would see that it was marked in some suitable way. Then came the sumptuous lunch and eloquent speeches. So prolonged was this part of the performance that Mrs. Watson whispered to Mrs. Avery, "Though this is very enjoyable I think we really must slip away or we shall be too late for the other meeting."

In the street car they talked the affair all over, agreeing that it had been very brilliant, both gastronomically and patriotically. "It has put me in such a glow of national pride," Mrs. Avery declared.

"But where are we, anyway?" she exclaimed, as they left the car and turned into a narrow street, "My, that's our church over there—isn't it? I declare I didn't know it from the rear."

It must be confessed she was not very familiar with the back door of the church, as her

attendance upon church affairs was generally limited to the Sunday morning service. The sight of the church, however, suggested another variation on her favorite theme.

"I do think our pastor is a dear, good man," she said, "and I know he is just as patriotic as he can be, but I wish he would show his patriotism a little more. Now, in all these months when most of the ministers have been preaching sermons suggested by the war, he has never preached about remembering the 'Maine,' or lessons from the war, or our new place among nations, or anything of the sort."

"He does seem to confine himself chiefly to preaching the Gospel," remarked Mrs. Watson, dryly.

Mrs. Avery glanced sharply at her companion, and dropped that part of the subject.

"I do wish I could see a flag floating from one of those towers," she began again. "So many churches have flags now, and the excitement of the flag-raising, the speeches, and singing and so on, make the occasion a patriotic object-lesson to the young. But what are you going into the church for? Did you leave your umbrella here last Sunday?"

"No, but this is where my club meets."

"Well, of all places!" Then a light began to dawn upon her. "See here! I believe you are just trying to inveigle me into one of those everlasting missionary meetings."

"No inveigling about it," replied Mrs. Watson, laughing. "You heard the regular meeting of our Woman's Home Missionary Society announced last Sunday, and you know I always attend. In the phrase of the day I thought you 'guessed it the first time.'"

"Never occurred to me, I assure you. But

now that I am here I might as well see what you do—that is if I can keep awake."

She had been at meetings in the ladies' assembly room once or twice, a few years ago, when arrangements were being made to furnish the church, but had never seen the room in a missionary aspect. She now beheld it bright and orderly, the walls hung with pictures and maps, in a conspicuous place the motto in illuminated letters, "Our Land for Christ;" the blackboard filled with statistics, and a table near the door covered with books and leaflets. A few palms and ferns, which she afterwards learned were loaned for the occasion by nearby members, were tastefully disposed about the room, making a good contrast to the red, white and blue of numerous flags.

"It looks as though you were celebrating a victory," she whispered.

"Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war," quoted Mrs. Watson.

Mrs. Avery had a vague idea that missionary meetings were very dull affairs, held in very dismal places, but this room was certainly bright and cheering, and she found this meeting as animated as the room was cheerful. It appeared to be Appropriation Day. The society was voting how to dispose of the funds raised during the year, aside from their pledged amount, which had already been paid in, and so judiciously was this money expended that one could not help regretting that the sum was not larger. The members were evidently deeply interested in what they were doing. Sometimes as the claims of a certain school or locality were presented there would be a little hailstorm of questions as to the why and wherefore of sending money there. This would call

forth a very lucid statement of the whole case from some one especially well informed on the subject, which would be to the edification of all. Then, again, the status of some other object would apparently be so well known that the money was voted almost before the question was put. A very interesting feature was brief reading or talks in connection with each little appropriation—an incident occurring in an Indian school, descriptions of Alaskan or Mexican customs, a short story of a Mountaineer home, the daily routine in an Afro-American seminary, or bits from missionaries' letters, giving comic or tragic experiences. Here would come in the maps and pictures, many of the latter being photographs of schools and little churches in different parts of the country, one nestling in a mountain cove, others embowered in the luxuriant foliage of the sunny South, others amid the ice and snow of the extreme North. Here was an earnest-faced teacher surrounded by her Mexican boys, here a graduating class of Mountaineer girls, there a little group of native Indian pastors, educated mainly by women missionaries. Thus briefly, but graphically, were set forth the conditions in the various divisions of the home mission field, the obstacles, encouragements and present situation being as far as possible indicated.

All this was a revelation to Mrs. Avery. Her notions of Home Mission work were very hazy, and she had no idea at all that the woman's work of her own denomination was so vast and so important. She learned many things in that hour, and also realized, most mortifyingly, how little she knew of her beloved country in some aspects. She had thought that the Mormons all lived in Utah,

and the most of the Indians, wild and civilized, in Indian Territory. She had no idea what "land in severalty" meant, nor what the Indian Rights Association was, nor anything about the immigration regulations, all of which points, and many others, appeared to be so perfectly familiar to the society. She was so busy listening and thinking that she quite forgot to go to sleep.

Upon entering the room she had been surprised to see, what she considered, so many women present at nothing but a missionary meeting, but before the close she wondered why so few attended. As the meeting dissolved into a hand-shaking function, she turned to Mrs. Watson to say something of this kind, but was immediately surrounded by friends and acquaintances, expressing their pleasure at seeing her there. Upon one of these she seized, exclaiming,

"Well, Kate Raymond! you here, and taking such an active part, too! I thought you were one of these *foreign* missionary women."

Mrs. Raymond, who always spoke her mind very freely and forcibly, promptly retorted, "O, you know

> 'The light that shines farthest
> Shines brightest at home!'

If you came around these churchly precincts a little oftener than you do, you would speedily discover that the foreign missionary woman and the home missionary woman are one and the same identical individual. You would see the same little crowd at both meetings. To-day the subject of Home Missions is uppermost, but if you'll drop in a couple of weeks later you'll hear enough about Foreign Missions.

However, with your leanings and proclivities, *this* is just the right place for you."

"What do you mean?" demanded the visitor.

Just then Miss Lyon joined the group, saluting Mrs. Avery with, "Welcome, long lost sister!"

"There! that's what I mean," said Mrs. Raymond. "A woman like you, just bubbling over with patriotism, belongs right here, and should have been here all the while. Just put your energies into Home Mission work and you've found your true vocation, and you will realize that laboring to Christianize all sorts and conditions of people in our country is the very best kind of an outlet for patriotism."

"Yes," chimed in Miss Lyon, "don't let your patriotic fervor effervesce in flag-waving and spread-eagleism. We need just such enthusiastic women as you to tack your enthusiasm to your Christianity and take hold of this work."

"Really, you two overwhelm me," laughed Mrs. Avery. "But isn't my enthusiasm just as well where it is? I am helping to keep green the brave deeds of yore."

"That's all very well," replied Miss Lyon, "but why not also help to make the present wilderness blossom as the rose?"

"You must remember," pursued Mrs. Avery, with dignity, "what my attachments are. Two of my grandfathers were officers in the Revolutionary war, and ——"

"O, I've just as many grandfathers as anybody else," Mrs. Raymond burst in, "and several of them fought, bled and died in various wars, but I'm not going to let their revered memories keep me from trying to serve the present age. In fact, what they did to make

the country free and great is a strong incentive to me to do all I can toward making it a truly Christian land."

"We don't suggest that any one should drop everything else for this," said Miss Lyon, "but it seems to me that whatever other organizations our church women affiliate with they should save time and strength for this Home Missionary Society. It is certainly a woman's club of national importance."

"Candidly, from what I've heard to-day, I cannot altogether disagree with you," said Mrs. Avery. Then she began to ask questions about the society, and was told that it was organized so as to take in all the women of the church, if they would only come in; that it worked along church lines, keeping close to the Boards, and that its ramifications spread all over the country.

"So you see," said Mrs. Watson, "wherever one goes she can find a place to step right into and continue her work."

"And it doesn't matter whether she has any ancestors or not," added Mrs. Raymond.

Mrs. Avery also heard further accounts of what had been done among the "exceptional" populations, for the foreigners and for neglected Americans, by a comparatively small number of Christian women, and how much more might be accomplished by a larger force of workers.

"O, if all the women in all the churches were with us in this work!" Mrs. Watson ejaculated.

"Well, here is one more recruit," said Mrs. Avery. 'I came, I saw, you conquered.' Then more earnestly, I begin to realize that a society like this is, as you say, a grand outlet for patriotism."

"I should say it is!" exclaimed Mrs. Raymond, impetuously. "It may be sweet to die for one's country, but it is glorious to live and help carry the Gospel throughout its length and breadth, and where can you find a better expression for the truest and highest kind of patriotism than in the watchword of our Society—Our Land for Christ!"

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